

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

2 March 1971

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 20-31-24

SUBJECT: Criteria for Determining Exposure to Hazards of an  
Unusual Nature and Premiums Applicable to Coordinated  
Federal Wage System Schedule Workers

1. Agency components should eliminate or reduce hazards, physical hardships, and working conditions of an unusual nature to the extent possible. Where such conditions cannot be eliminated, payment of an environmental differential to wage schedule workers is warranted for exposure to hazards, physical hardships, and/or working conditions of an unusual nature which could result in significant injury, illness, or death; and to circumstances which cause significant physical discomfort or distress not eliminated by protective devices. Differentials are provided as shown in paragraph 3 below. These differentials are consistent with those allowable under Federal Personnel Manual Supplement 532-1, FPM Ltr. 532-17 and FPM Ltr. 532-19. All differentials will be paid on an actual exposure basis by hours and minutes or for all paid hours for a calendar day. Differentials are effective beginning the first day of November 1970.

2. Operations involving substantial units of hazardous material calling for research, testing, manufacturing, inspection, maintenance or disposal of hazardous items, (including pouring, repackaging or handling of inner containers which are not incidental to use of the product) are unusual and subject to the appropriate differential provided such hazards have not been considered in the allocation of the position. Explosives or similar materials can be in ounces or milliliters while other materials of comparable hazard are in pounds or gallons. Wage schedule work involving use of cleaners, drain cleaner (lye), detergents, or bleaches (sodium hyposulfite), or similar poisons is not considered an unusual hazard.

3. The schedules of differentials are listed below:

Part I - Payment for Actual Exposure

(a) High Work - 25% Differential Rate

a. Working on any structure at least 100 feet above the ground, deck, floor or roof; or from the bottom of a tank or pit;

b. Working at a lesser height:

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- (1) if the footing is unsure or the structure is unstable; or
- (2) if safe scaffolding, enclosed ladders or other similar protective facilities are not adequate (for example, working from a swinging stage, boatswain chair, a similar support); or
- (3) if adverse conditions such as darkness, steady rain, high wind, icing, lightning or similar environmental factors render working at such height(s) hazardous.

(b) Dirty Work - 4% Differential Rate

Performing work which subjects the employee to soil of body or clothing:

- a. Beyond that normally to be expected in performing the duties of the classification; and
- b. Where the condition is not adequately alleviated by the mechanical equipment or protective devices being used, or which are readily available, or when such devices are not feasible for use due to health considerations (excessive temperature, dust conditions, etc.),
- c. When the use of mechanical equipment, or protective devices, or protective clothing results in an unusual degree of discomfort.

Example:

Employees engaged in cleaning fly ash and other debris from fire pits of large incinerators where there is soil of clothing beyond normal duty requirements including discomfort when using dust catching respirator and total protective body coverings.

Part II - Payment on Basis of Hours in Pay Status

(all paid hours of a calendar day on which the exposure occurs)

- (a) Explosives and Incendiary Material-High Degree Hazard-8% Differential Rate

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Working with or in close proximity to explosives and incendiary material which involves potential personal injury such as permanent or temporary, partial or complete loss of sight or hearing, partial or complete loss of any or all extremities; other partial or total disabilities of equal severity; and/or loss of life resulting from work situations wherein protective devices and/or safety measures either do not exist or have been developed but have not practically eliminated the potential for such personal injury.

Examples:

Working with, or in close proximity to operations involved in research, testing, manufacturing, inspection, renovation, maintenance and disposal, such as: manufacture, neutralization, drying, etc., of high explosives, propellants, primer, raw nitroglycerine, pyrotechnic compositions, sensitive explosives, pellets; fire fighting on artillery range, ammunition manufacturing plants or storage areas including heavy duty equipment operators, truck drivers, etc.; or testing and arming charges and work in close proximity thereto.

Igniters, Rocket Motors: Loading, testing, packing, or transporting and any work in the immediate area of such items where the high energy power sources are present.

Explosive Power Devices: Of more power than small arms ammunition (high potential for loss of life). Packing, handling, transporting, or working in close proximity to powered devices. (Where separated from power source use power potential for damage and loss of life to determine if high degree or low degree.)

Common Fireworks Deflagration Potential - Assembly or packing wherein more than a three (3) foot cube of incendiary materials is involved.

- (b) Explosives and Incendiary Material-Low Degree Hazard-4% Differential Rate

Working with, or in close proximity to explosives and incendiary material which involves potential injury such as laceration of hands, face, or arms of the employee engaged in the operation and possible adjacent employees; minor irritation of the skin, minor burns and the like; minimal damage to immediate or adjacent work area or equipment being used.

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Most operations involving open ingredients or unpacked items more hazardous than small-arms ammunition are considered unusual. Likewise, large packed cargoes which, if subject to detonation of the entire load, could damage the total work area, are considered unusual.

Examples:

All operations involving loading, unloading, storage and hauling of explosive and incendiary ordnance material other than small-arms ammunition.

Duties such as weighing, scooping, consolidating, and crimping operations incident to the manufacture of stab, percussion, and low energy electric detonators (initiators) utilizing sensitive primary explosives compositions where initiation would be kept to a low order of propagation due to the limited amounts permitted to be present or handled during the operations.

Load, assembly and packing of primers, fuses, propellant charges, lead cups, boosters, and time-train rings.

Weighing, scooping, loading in bags and sewing of igniter charges and propellant zone charges.

Loading, assembly, and packing of hand-held signals, smoke signals, and colored marker signals.

Drivers or other workers handling cargo at stops or destinations with work calling for close proximity to packed part load explosives or incendiaries are eligible for exposure.

Common Fireworks Deflagration Potential - Assembly or packing wherein less than a three (3) foot cube of incendiary materials is in the immediate area. For more than a three (3) foot cube see (a) above.

(c) Poisons-High Degree Hazard-8% Differential Rate

Working with or in close proximity to poisons (toxic chemicals), other than tear gas or similar irritants, which involves potential serious personal injury such as permanent or temporary, partial or complete loss of faculties and/or loss of life including exposure of an unusual degree to toxic chemicals, dust, or fumes of equal toxicity generated in work situations by processes required to perform work assignments wherein protective devices and/or safety measures have been developed but have not practically eliminated the potential for such personal injury.

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Examples:

Handling and storing toxic chemical agents including monitoring of areas to detect presence of vapor or liquid chemical agents; examining of material for signs of leakage or deteriorated material; decontaminating equipment and work sites; work relating to disposal of deteriorated material; (exposure to conjunctivitis, pulmonary edema, blood infection, impairment of the nervous system, possible death).

Renovation, maintenance, and modification of toxic chemicals, guided missiles, and selected munitions.

Operating various types of chemical engineering equipment in a restricted area such as reactors, filters; stripping units, fractioning columns, blenders, mixers, pumps, and the like utilized in the development, manufacturing, and processing of toxic or experimental chemical warfare agents.

Demilitarizing and neutralizing toxic chemical munitions and chemical agents.

Handling or working with toxic chemicals in restricted areas during production operations.

Preparing analytical reagents, carrying out colorimetric and photometric techniques, injecting laboratory animals with compounds having toxic, incapacitating or other effects.

Recording analytical and biological tests results where subject to above types of exposure.

Visually examining chemical agents to determine conditions or detect leaks in storage containers.

Transferring chemical agents between containers.

Salvaging and disposing of chemical agents.

(d) Poisons (Toxic Chemicals)-Low Degree Hazard-4% Differential Rate

Working with or in close proximity to poisons (toxic chemicals other than tear gas or similar irritating substances) in situations for which the nature of the work does not require the individual to be in as direct contact with, or exposure to, the more toxic agents as in the case with the work described under high hazard for this class of hazardous agents.

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Examples:

Handling for shipping, marking, labeling, hauling and storing loaded containers of toxic chemical agents that have been monitored.

Packaging, and repacking from shipping containers, including change in size of container involving pouring or other handling with protective clothing, mask, gloves, etc., the following materials:

Carbon Tetrachloride	Nitric Acid
Chlordane (Powder or Liquid)	Sulphuric Acid
Cyanides (Dust, solid or Liq)	Trichlorethane
Chloroform	Trichlorethylene
Lindane	
Malathion	

4. Administration

Each differential is a percentage of the W-10 step 2 rate for the local area. Part I differentials are payable on an actual exposure basis with a minimum of one hour's differential pay for the initial exposure period up to one hour, and the employee shall be paid in increments of one quarter hour for each fifteen minutes and/or portion thereof in excess of the first hour. Part II differentials are for all paid hours of the calendar day on which exposure occurs.

Intermittent exposure times during a shift or day, (but not within the same clock hour) to a condition for which an environmental differential is paid will result in payment on an actual exposure basis with each exposure considered separately. When more than one exposure occurs in the same hour the employee shall be paid only for the exposure which results in the highest differential. Pay for environmental differential may not exceed the number of hours of active duty by the employee on the day of exposure under Part I.

Environmental differential is included as part of the employee's basic rate of pay and shall be used to compute premium pay (overtime, holiday, or Sunday work), or the amount from which retirement deductions are made or on which group life insurance is based.

Amendments to this OPM will be issued as the hazards and hardships of Agency work operations are documented and new or revised differential items are determined.

[REDACTED]  
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Director of Personnel

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